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AIM REPORT

For Fairness, Balance
and Accuracy in News
Reporting

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Media Continue Benghazi Cover-Up

By Roger Aronoff

With the December 30th release of a second report on the murder of four Americans in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, it has become increasingly problematic for President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to avoid responsibility for the act itself, much less the cover-up. Clinton reportedly will testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee shortly after the presidential inauguration on January 21. Senate Republicans said they would hold up Sen. John Kerry's confirmation as Hillary's replacement until she gave such testimony.

The report, entitled "Flashing Red: A Special Report On The Terrorist Attack At Benghazi," was done by the Senate Homeland Security Committee, headed by outgoing Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut. The report cited numerous "flashing red lights," warning of the lack of sufficient security at the consulate in Benghazi. It wasn't just cables and requests for more security; it was the attack on the Red Cross, the British, and the American consulate twice.

The report also confirms that there was no protest outside the compound before the attack. But it fails to explain why the President and secretary of state maintained a false narrative that the attack was sparked by a spontaneous demonstration in response to an anti-Muslim video made in the U.S. They knew that wasn't true, but the report made no attempt to explain why they stuck to that story.

As to whether or not the Department of Defense (DOD) should have been able to send a rescue mission, the explanation to the committee was that there wasn't enough time. Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) found that incredulous, saying it was reasonable for the initial attack on the consulate on September 11. The consulate is referred to in these reports as the Temporary Mission Facility, but the second attack was on the CIA annex, about a mile away.

Earlier, Leon Panetta, the Secretary of Defense, had said "you don't send troops into action on limited information." That was the previous explanation for not getting military support to Benghazi in time to save lives. That is certainly different than



saying they lacked the troops to send there.

Pentagon spokesman George Little said the attacks happened too quickly for the U.S. military to respond.

"The Department of Defense responded quickly to the unfolding tragedy in Benghazi," he said. "There simply wasn't enough time for U.S. military forces outside Libya to respond before the incidents ended."

There were all sorts of failures of communication. One issue was that the head of the U.S. military's Africa Command wasn't aware of how many Americans were in the area, which Sen. Collins said "came as a shock to me." He wasn't even aware of the roughly two dozen CIA personnel who were stationed at the annex near the Temporary Mission.

That finding led to one of the report's conclusions: that "the U.S. Africa Command needs additional people, ships and aircraft to protect Americans in Africa, which is increasingly becoming a haven for terrorist groups."

The Obama administration is criticized for "inconsistent" explanations. In other words, though the report doesn't say so, the administration lied, repeatedly. Obama spoke in the Rose Garden on September 12, but didn't call the attack the day

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AIM

in the News

Accuracy in Media has received a lot of attention because of the purchase of **Al Gore's Current TV** by **Al Jazeera**, the Qatar-owned network. **AIM's Cliff Kincaid** was on **The Kudlow Report**, with economist **Larry Kudlow**, to discuss why **Al Jazeera** is referred to as **Terror Television**.

Politico wrote, "the watchdog group **Accuracy in Media** called for a congressional probe into the 'controversial operations of the foreign propaganda channel,' labeling it a 'Homeland Security threat.'"

Also, from **Politico**, "In a press release, **Accuracy In Media** accused **Al Jazeera** of 'planning to reach American Muslims, who primarily speak English, with inflammatory words and images making America out to be the enemy and villain in the Middle East,' though it did not specify what those words and images were or would be."

AIM continues to need your help. We are ramping up to once again do what we can to see that **Al Jazeera** remains limited in its reach and influence. Please visit our website, aim.org, and please donate and sign up for our daily email. We appreciate your continued support, and will continue to keep a close eye on the media.

Editor's Message



Dear Fellow Media Watchdogs:

President Obama's "flexibility" that he promised to Russian president Dmitry Medvedev, should he be re-elected, has gotten off to a rousing start, domestically speaking. Obama said during the campaign that he would seek \$1 in new tax revenue for every \$2.5 of spending cuts. Yet when it came time to negotiate terms to avert going over the "fiscal cliff," his offer was two dollars in new tax revenue for every one dollar in spending cuts. And in the end, according to the

Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the last-minute deal reached by congressional leaders and President Obama cut spending by only \$15 billion, while increasing tax revenues by \$620 billion over 10 years—a better than 40 to 1 ratio of tax increases to spending cuts. The biggest victory Republicans claimed in the deal was that the lower Bush tax rates were extended for individuals making \$400,000 per year, and \$450,000 for couples, when otherwise the rates would have gone up for everyone.

There are still three more fiscal hurdles ahead in the coming months, and each one will likely also be packed with hostage-taking drama, right down to the wire. Obama says he won't deal on the debt-ceiling limit, though some creative ideas are being suggested to him to be able to just ignore Congress. One is the use of the 14th Amendment, which even Democratic legal scholars say is a non-starter. It does not give the President the unilateral right to raise money. It states in Section 4, "The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law...shall not be questioned." But then Section 5 says, "The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article."

The other trial balloon being floated is the idea of a platinum coin, minted by the Treasury, and taken over to the Federal Reserve, with a stated value of one trillion dollars. Instead of selling bonds, some, including New York Times left-wing economist/columnist Paul Krugman, believe the President should use a quirk in the law to push this through, since working with Congress the old fashioned way appears to be off the table. Krugman, a former Enron advisor, acknowledges that the platinum coin would, "Basically...be an accounting trick, but that's a good thing," and "entirely appropriate."

The other fiscal hurdles we are coming up on are votes to deal with sequestration, meaning equal, across the board cuts to Defense and domestic spending, and the Continuing Resolution (CR), which is what authorizes the government to keep paying bills even though the Senate hasn't actually passed a budget since 2009.

The bottom line is that we have reached the era of Gridlock Government, with a "flexible" President Obama prepared to circumvent Congress and the Constitution. It's going to be one helluva ride. •

For Accuracy in Media

Roger Aronoff

Your Letters

Please send Letters to the Editor to:

Accuracy in Media

Attn: Letters to the Editor

4455 Connecticut Ave, NW #330

Washington, DC 20008

or email to info@aim.org

Please keep your submissions to 50 words or less. Letters may be edited for length.

To the Editor:

I can't believe how disgraceful the media is. Just look at MSNBC, and you will see there is no difference between them and Obama and the Democratic Party. This is so dangerous.

Great J.

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before a terrorist act, as he later tried to claim he had done. If he believed it was, which clearly the Intelligence Community (IC), State and the FBI concluded early on, he would have said so, and would have had UN Ambassador Susan Rice say so. Instead, she was sent out to state the administration's position on five Sunday talk shows. Obama later called it a "presentation based on intelligence that she had received," and that her appearances were done "at the request of the White House."

Then-CIA director David Petraeus told the Senate Intelligence Committee two days after the event that it wasn't a terrorist act, according to committee chairman Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). Later, after resigning over an extramarital affair, Petraeus changed his story and said they had believed from day one that it was terrorism.

He told Congress on November 16 that his original talking points, which had been cleared for public dissemination, included the likely involvement by terrorists and an al-Qaeda affiliate, but that someone had removed the references before they were used to inform the public, referring to Susan Rice.

On September 14 at Andrews Air Force Base, Hillary apologized to the father of Tyrone Webb, one of the former Navy SEALs murdered in Benghazi. She said they would arrest and prosecute the person who made the offensive video, as if that were the cause of the attack. They did arrest him, and he still sits in jail for an outrageous video that he made.

These were but a few of the examples of attempts to mislead the public and Con-

gress about what the Obama administration knew, and when they knew it.

The Homeland Security Committee took this opportunity to criticize not just State, but the Department of Defense, the IC, and the White House.

"One of the key lessons of this Committee's six-year focus on the threat of violent Islamist extremism is that, in order to understand and counter the threat we face, we must clearly identify that threat."

What we've seen are failures of epic proportion. A failure to acknowledge our

The media's refusal to treat this as a serious scandal of the Obama Administration is evidence of their continuing determination to avoid any such whiff of scandal.

enemy and to respond or react to pleas for added security in the face of specific acts against our people; a failure to have contingency plans in effect that might have saved American lives; a failure to send the FBI or any investigators to secure the crime scene for weeks; an effort to lie and deceive by the administration about the cause of the attack, and how they had responded; a fake firing of four State Department employees, who actually were temporarily reassigned; a failure of policy in the Middle East to combat radical Islam; a compliant media, eager to assist Obama's chances for reelection.

The media's refusal to treat this as a serious scandal of the Obama Administration

is evidence of their continuing determination to avoid any such whiff of scandal. We've seen it in the past with Solyndra, Fast and Furious, and executive decisions to decide which laws they believe are constitutional and will enforce.

In addition to all this—the criminal terrorist act, the cover-up, the failure of the media to give a damn, and to act like it's all about partisan politics—the lone suspect in the case who was being held in Tunisia has been released.

When David Gregory had a chance to ask President Obama on Meet the Press on December 30, 2012, the day the Homeland Security Committee report was released, he asked a couple of softball questions about Benghazi, with no suggestion that the President or his administration had done anything wrong.

"After the attack in Benghazi, is there a need for more accountability so that this doesn't happen again? And do you know who was behind the attack at this point?" For a follow-up, he asked, "In the politics, in the back and forth in this, do you feel like you let your friend Susan Rice hang out there to dry a little bit?"

The media have largely tried to move beyond this story. With three more economic deadlines, a State of the Union address, an inauguration and the process of confirming Obama's second term national security team, this story could easily become forgotten. It will be up to Congress and those in the media who recognize a scandal when they see one, to keep this story alive.

Roger Aronoff is the Editor of AIM.

Progressives Want Obama to Release Killer of Two FBI Agents

By Cliff Kincaid

Leftist filmmaker Michael Moore's website proudly features a video of MSNBC's erratic and unstable commentator Lawrence O'Donnell referring to NRA official Wayne LaPierre as "blood-drenched" because the organization favors the Second Amendment right of self-defense. O'Donnell, one of several commentators on the channel who demonize conservative groups and individuals, was trying to somehow connect the gun rights organization to the mass murder at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. O'Donnell utterly failed to estab-

lish any kind of factual link between the NRA and that crime, which was carried out by a madman in violation of numerous "gun control" laws.

But Moore's opposition to bloody murder in Newtown, Connecticut, was shocking for another reason. It turns out that, on the very day of the massacre, he was appearing in New York City at a concert seeking President Obama's release of convicted killer Leonard Peltier from prison. Peltier is serving two consecutive life sentences for the execution-style murders of FBI Special Agents Jack Coler and Ronald

Williams in 1975.

If anyone is blood-drenched, it is Peltier and those who support him.

Joining Moore at the event, designed to raise money for a propaganda campaign on Peltier's behalf, was Common, a black "rap artist" known for "A Song for Assata," in honor of a convicted cop-killer who escaped from prison and is now hiding out in Cuba. Common performed at the White House in 2011.

Common told AP that he researched the Peltier case before deciding to appear on his behalf. "I did my own due

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diligence,” he claimed. This “research,” if really done, would have determined that Peltier’s conviction has withstood multiple appeals to different courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

An official FBI summary of the case notes, “Normally, a federal criminal defendant is entitled to a single court-appointed attorney chosen by rotation. Peltier received five lawyers—two as trial attorneys and three as investigators. All were chosen by Peltier, rather than the normal rotation process, and all were paid for by the government. The defense received almost double the normal number of preemptory challenges during jury selection. Peltier’s lawyers were allowed to personally question the jury, which is highly unusual in federal criminal cases. The trial court provided daily transcripts of testimony to the defense, a very expensive measure which is rarely allowed. After his conviction, Peltier was allowed to dismiss four of his five trial attorneys and hire new ones for his appeals. Peltier’s arguments have been presented repeatedly to a U.S. Magistrate, three U.S. District Court Judges, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. The U.S. Supreme Court has twice denied requests to hear the case after reviewing defense arguments.”

AP reporter John Carucci was clearly sympathetic to the cause of getting him released, noting that “Peltier’s advocates say he has been in poor health in recent years,” as if getting old and sick in prison is sufficient to get clemency from Obama. AP also assured its readers that Common affirms, “he’s not soft on crime.”

During the Leonard Peltier concert on December 14 at the Beacon Theatre in New York City, Michael Moore declared, “I like to say that I sort of agree with the NRA when they say, ‘Guns don’t kill people, people kill people,’ except I would just modify that a bit and say, ‘Guns don’t kill people, Americans kill people,’ because that’s what we do.”

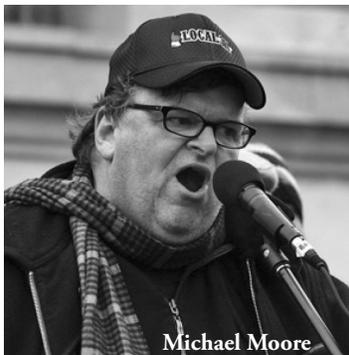
He went on, “We invade countries. We

send drones in to kill civilians. We’ve got five wars going on right now where our soldiers are killing people—I mean, five that we know of. We are on the short list of illustrious countries who have the death penalty. We believe it’s okay to kill you when you’ve committed a crime.”

He claimed “other forms of violence” include people without health insurance. “All the wrong people are in prison in this country,” he proclaimed.

These comments are even more bizarre in view of the fact that he was appearing specifically on behalf of a convicted murderer.

In official testimony, the FBI has described how their agents were killed during a shootout with Peltier and his associates, all of whom were members of the American Indian Movement. Special Agents



Coler and Williams had been wounded but their wounds were not fatal. An FBI official said Peltier “approached these two agents as they lay on the ground, wounded and disabled,” and “then shot both agents at point-blank range.”

Yet, Moore is urging Obama to release this cold-blooded killer from prison.

The “Bring Leonard Peltier Home 2012” concert also featured Harry Belafonte, the Marxist actor who raised money for Democrat Elizabeth Warren in her successful Massachusetts Senate race, Jackson Browne and communist folksinger Pete Seeger.

The left-wing program Democracy Now!, which is being carried by three dozen taxpayer-supported public televi-

sion stations, hailed Moore’s “poetic plea” to Obama to release the killer from prison. Program host Amy Goodman followed with an interview of Peltier, in which she encouraged him to deliver a message to Obama. He asked Obama to “turn me loose.”

As Accuracy in Media has previously reported, support for Peltier does exist in the “progressive” ranks of the Democratic Party as well as Hollywood. Even Defense Secretary Leon Panetta is on record in favor of executive clemency for him. Actor Robert Redford narrated a 1992 film, “Incident at Ogala,” about the case, and insisted in an interview with Goodman that Peltier was somehow framed by the FBI.

The Moscow-funded propaganda channel Russia Today came to Peltier’s defense as well, calling him an “Indian activist” who opposed racism and injustice.

As part of the propaganda campaign, supporters of Peltier renamed Thanksgiving Day the “Native American Day of Mourning.” Banners proclaiming “Free Leonard Peltier” were on display during the event.

As part of its “Teaching Tolerance” project, the Southern Poverty Law Center runs an “activity” for students called “Thanksgiving Mourning,” which promoted the United American Indians of New England as a resource. Its site also calls for Peltier’s release.

Peltier was denied parole in 2009 and won’t be eligible again until 2024. Their only hope for his freedom from prison now lies with Obama.

For his part, Obama is quoted by a pro-Peltier website as saying, “Get me the political support,” and then he will free the killer.

The Leonard Peltier Defense Offense Committee is confident, declaring in an email message to supporters, “We believe that President Obama will sign the order that sets Leonard free!”

Cliff Kincaid is Director of the AIM Center for Investigative Journalism.

Rupert Murdoch Backs Obama’s Gun Grab

By Cliff Kincaid

An honest account of media misinformation after the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy has to take into account Rupert Murdoch’s tweet

about the need to ban “automatic weapons,” when none was used to kill any of the 26 people. Can the chairman of News Corporation, the parent of Fox News, be this ignorant about the nature of gun laws

and guns in America?

He asked, “When will politicians find courage to ban automatic weapons?” He urged Obama to exercise “bold leadership” on the issue.

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Deep inside his story about the comments, Gabriel Sherman of New York magazine noted, “Despite Murdoch’s plea, automatic weapons are already illegal in the United States; Adam Lanza [the killer] used semiautomatics.”

In fact, automatic weapons are not technically illegal but are subject to extensive regulation and are very difficult to obtain.

One interesting aspect of this controversy is that left-leaning reporters such as Dylan Byers of Politico publicized Murdoch’s comments without correcting him. Others followed suit. “Rupert Murdoch demanded tighter gun control in the aftermath of the horrific shooting in Newtown, Connecticut,” reported The Huffington Post, without noting that his remarks were inaccurate and the “gun control” he talked about was already in effect.

This is fascinating because, in the past, liberal media have tried to claim that Fox News personnel spew misinformation about current events, leading to a lack of knowledge about important matters of public policy. Here is a case of the owner of Fox News, The Wall Street Journal, and other properties saying something that is completely erroneous and irrelevant to what happened in Newtown, Connecticut.

But why would liberal publications not want people to know that Murdoch was in error? There are several possible explanations:

(1) They do not understand gun laws, either, and didn’t realize Murdoch was wrong.

(2) They don’t care that Murdoch was wrong and wanted to use his mistaken comment to spread misinformation to the public about the killings.

(3) They know Murdoch was wrong but wanted to use his comment to send a message to Fox News Channel hosts and commentators that they should get on the “gun control” bandwagon with their boss.

Some conservative-oriented news sites did correct the media mogul. “Early news reports indicate that automatic weapons were not used in yesterday’s school shooting,” Breitbart News reported, in a brief story about Murdoch’s comments. Indeed, no evidence of automatic weapons being used has turned up. Twitchy Media noted, “Closer attention to the reports coming out of his media properties would have in-

formed Murdoch that automatic weapons weren’t used in today’s mass shooting in Newtown, Conn.”

Also oblivious to the facts, Malcolm Turnbull, who reportedly knows Murdoch, replied by saying that the politicians would act when pressured by the media and that “I suspect they will find the courage when Fox News enthusiastically campaigns for it.”

This, then, is why the comment is getting so much attention from the left. The political progressives saw it as an effort to send marching orders to the conservative news channel to back Obama’s controversial call for more legislation.

Media Matters, the George Soros-funded left-wing organization, jumped on the comments, contrasting Murdoch’s “Call For [A] Weapons Ban” with how Fox News Channel commentators supposedly were guilty in the past of “Extreme Pro-gun Rhetoric.” The “rhetoric” consisted of comments in favor of the constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

The New York Post, another Murdoch property, has already demonstrated Mur-



doch’s influence by following his lead and running an editorial on December 18 insisting that Lanza’s semi-automatic rifle somehow functioned like a “fully automatic” weapon. The editorial seemed like an attempt to justify Murdoch’s erroneous comments.

“It is very discouraging that Murdoch thinks that machine guns have anything to do with these attacks,” noted John Lott, the author of *More Guns, Less Crime*. “There are strong self-defense reasons for people to have semi-automatic weapons.”

In addition to such figures as Larry Pratt of Gun Owners of America, Lott

has been willing to take on those in the media, especially on CNN, who are guilty of spreading misinformation about the massacre. But he has not been invited to appear on Fox News to rebut gun grabbers like Murdoch.

Referring to Lott’s credentials as a FoxNews.com columnist, Eric Wemple of The Washington Post notes that the Fox News Channel is failing to use its “go-to guy on hand” to counter federal calls for more “gun control” legislation. He said Lott’s “low profile” on FoxNews.com since the killings suggests that the network and its website are “treading carefully” on the subject.

Rather than “treading carefully,” it appears that the Fox News Channel is marching to Murdoch’s directives, as revealed on his Twitter page. Perhaps Lott’s willingness to rebut Murdoch on his blog helps explain why he in particular is not being effectively utilized by the channel.

What’s worse, as Gabriel Sherman has reported, a Lott column about the differences between semiautomatics and so-called military style assault weapons was actually killed by FoxNews.com.

What we are seeing here is a coordinated attempt to use Murdoch’s erroneous comments to further a political left-wing agenda. Murdoch’s employees are capable of understanding that the comments are being exploited for political purposes. But it is quite another thing to say on the air that the boss is wrong and to keep churning out facts that contradict Murdoch’s dubious position.

We appear to be witnessing self-censorship on the part of Fox News, in order to serve Murdoch’s agenda.

Fox News has to be carefully monitored in the weeks ahead to see if the Murdoch comments have a continued impact on the channel and are used to muzzle the case for gun rights as Obama and his other media allies lay the groundwork for further restrictions on the Second Amendment.

The information source many conservatives go to for accurate and informed coverage appears to be going the way of the liberal media.

Cliff Kincaid is the Director of the AIM Center for Investigative Journalism, and can be contacted at cliff.kincaid@aim.org.

ABC's Jake Tapper Nails Obama for Being AWOL on Gun Violence

By Don Irvine



During a rare press conference at the White House with President Obama, where he announced a task-force to recommend steps to try and prevent future massacres like the one in Newtown, Connecticut, ABC's Chief White House Correspondent Jake Tapper called the President out for not having previously done something about the issue of gun violence.

Tapper: "It seems to a lot of observers that you made the political calculation in 2008 in your first term and in 2012 not to talk about gun violence. You had your position on renewing the ban on semi-automatic rifles that then-Senator Biden put into place, but you didn't do much. This is not the first issue, incident of gun violence of your four years. Where have you been?"

Obama: "Well, here's where I've been Jake. I've been President of the United States dealing with the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, an auto industry on the verge of collapse, two wars. I don't think I've been on vacation. And so, I think all of us have to do some reflection on how we prioritize what we do here in Washington."

One of those priorities apparently is golf, considering that Obama has played 104 rounds as of last summer. But those outings don't count as vacations in his book. •



Don Irvine is the Chairman of Accuracy in Media

Fox News Rolls 11th Year As Number One Cable News Channel

By Don Irvine

The new year appeared to bring good news for the Fox News Channel. Preliminary numbers showed that it would end 2012 as the number one cable news network for the 11th straight year.

Not only is Fox the number one cable news channel, it is also the number three ad-supported channel in all of cable TV in primetime, according to TVNewser. Fox has the top 11 cable news shows in total viewers and the top seven in the key A25-54 demographic.

The unabashedly liberal MSNBC finished a distant second again with "The



Rachel Maddow Show" finishing twelfth in total viewers and eighth in the demo.

While both Fox and MSNBC managed to grow their audiences in 2012, one-time cable news kingpin CNN saw its primetime audience dip slightly, while suffering a double digit decline in the daytime.

CNN is hoping 2013 brings a reversal of fortune with a new president, Jeff Zucker, who apparently is already thinking about tinkering with the network's morning and primetime lineup.

Despite the gains at MSNBC, the fact remains that Fox News is a ratings juggernaut and isn't likely to be replaced as number one anytime soon.

The final numbers will be available sometime in January.

Sandy Hook Tragedy Powers CNN to Ratings Win

By Don Irvine

The tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December that took the lives of 20 school-children, plus eight adults, helped power

CNN to a rare ratings victory that day.

CNN, which has been badly lagging both Fox News and MSNBC, saw viewers in the key A25-54 demographic turn their attention to the network as the story unfolded, once again underscoring the public's preference to turn to CNN when there is a major, breaking news story.

The victory for CNN was complete, with the network winning every hour in the demo from 5 p.m. through midnight, and doing so convincingly, with Anderson Cooper beating ratings champ The O'Reilly Factor by 212,000 viewers in the 8 p.m. hour and swamping Greta Van Susteren in the 10 p.m. hour by 411,000.

While CNN beat Fox News by a fairly substantial margin, it completely obliterated MSNBC by 600,000-700,000 viewers in primetime, giving the liberal network its lowest ratings in more than a year.

But CNN shouldn't get too excited by this ratings spike. The ratings dropped back as the stories related to the tragedy started to fade, once again exposing the weak lineup that continues to plague the network. •

Don's 4,000th Blog Post

On a completely unrelated note, this marks my 4,000th blog post on the AIM site since 2004. When I first began I would write about whatever struck my fancy or what was bothering me at the time—like hitting a deer with my car, or the battle over public financing of the Washington Nationals stadium. I gradually moved on to critiquing the news and the latest instances of media bias. I have found a rich target in Chris Matthews, much like my father did with Dan Rather in the early days of AIM. It's been fun and educational for me and I hope it has been that and more for you. Thank's for your support as I blog on to 5,000. •

What You Can Do

Please send the enclosed postcards to:

- Mr. Paul Krugman, liberal darling and New York Times columnist, for his column calling on Obama to mint a trillion dollar coin;

- Ms. CynDee Royle, the editor of the Journal News of Westchester, NY, for her paper's publishing an interactive map with the names and addresses of legal gun owners, in response to Sandy Hook;

- Please make a sizable donation to AIM to help us continue our work in 2013